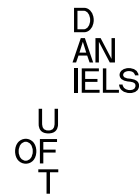


Resilient Toronto

Part 3: Launching Implementation – June 4, 2019.

This document summarizes the final event of a three-part series designed to engage city-builders and residents in the development and implementation of a robust Resilience Strategy for the City of Toronto. This event launched Toronto's First Resilience Strategy and engaged participants in discussions to move from Strategy to implementation.



School of Cities
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

EVENT SUMMARY

“This Strategy is meant to **LIGHT A SPARK** – to drive action at the City and from business, academia, non-profit organizations, and residents to build a city where everyone can thrive.”

Toronto’s First Resilience Strategy

The event, attended by over 200 participants, featured an overview of the Strategy from Chief Resilience Officer Elliott Cappell, questions & discussion from attendees about the Strategy, a Resilient TO Exhibition and three breakout sessions focused on pivoting to implementation.

Participants came from a cross-section of the city-building sector: representing non-profit organizations focused on community, environmental, and equity issues; consulting firms; private-sector companies; universities and colleges from across the region; Provincial and city staff, including Toronto Council and; Toronto residents.

There was great enthusiasm for the Strategy and the collaborative way in which it was developed. Participants expressed congratulations to the City’s team and its extensive network of partners for bringing together a wide range of perspectives and ideas.

Several themes emerged through the questions and breakout sessions, including:

- The urgency and imperative of moving into implementation and action and not allowing the Strategy to flounder on a shelf.
- The need to secure funding to implement the Strategy and the importance of identifying clear ownership over implementation of actions across the Strategy.
- Ensuring the equity lens continue as a guiding principle in prioritizing what gets implemented.
- The importance of collaboration and engaging a range of perspectives for implementation and problem-solving.
- The need to build on existing knowledge, initiatives, processes and leverage local capacity.

“I felt that the launch, like the Strategy, brought together a wide array of perspectives. It was a chance to remember that resilience isn’t just about hazards or infrastructure, it is about the people and network of relationships that make up our city.” – Launch Participant

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE STRATEGY

“I couldn’t be prouder than I am in this moment to help introduce such a thorough, well thought out, and comprehensive Resilience Strategy for our city. The Resilience Strategy will prepare us for a future with climate change, population growth and urbanization. We need all City resources, staff, and partners engaged and ready to take action. I look forward to using the lens of resilience in my work at City Hall”

Councillor Jennifer McKelvie



Photo: Harry Choi



Photo: Harry Choi

EVENT PARTICIPANTS

“I think [the Strategy] has the potential to address key issues in a more strategic and collaborative way. Residents are already resilient and the Strategy is seeking to build capacity, supports and infrastructure that address[es] their needs.”

“I think [the Strategy] is a proud accomplishment and [it is] disappointing that the funding for implementation is not in place. I hope that the City honours its commitment to see it through and [does] not have this lovely document collect dust on a shelf.”

“I really enjoyed hearing about the consultation process and partnerships formed.”

BREAKOUT SESSION 1 - CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The Climate Resilience Breakout Session was moderated by the TRCA, and featured a panel of speakers representing: Sustainability Solutions Group (SSG) who led the development of the Strategy's Climate Resilience Framework; the City of Toronto's Green Streets Initiative; Indigenous Climate Action; and the YMCA of Greater Toronto. Audience members were invited to sit with the panel to discuss their thoughts on the Climate Resilience Framework. **The key themes that emerged were:**

Addressing funding challenges through collaborative action

Audience members raised lack of dedicated funding for implementation as a concern. SSG's Mel de Jager emphasized that the success of the Resilience Strategy will require new approaches to addressing climate change collaboratively: resilience efforts will succeed when everyone works together to take action on climate change.

This includes public and private sectors, community organizations, academia & individuals.

Building on Indigenous knowledge and approaches

Andrea Bastien from Indigenous Climate Action encouraged collectively building on the successes of what others are already doing to implement the Strategy and continuing to share and learn from other communities. She described the importance of engaging with Indigenous communities in a reciprocal way; indicating that success happens when Indigenous peoples and communities are able to lead the process. These kinds of approaches are bottom-up and focused on capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and community.



BREAKOUT SESSION 1 - CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Multi-hazard approach, social equity and co-benefits

Mel de Jager described some of the principles of the Climate Resilient Framework. This includes taking a multi-hazard approach, looking for multiple impacts, including community enhancement when making investments, and analyzing climate vulnerability through a social equity lens.

For instance, using green infrastructure to reduce flooding and heat risks while simultaneously providing community benefits. Shayna Stott from the City's Green Streets initiative and Alex Versluis from YMCA of Greater Toronto discussed the co-benefits that green infrastructure and resilient buildings can support, including residents' physical, social and mental well-being. This kind of approach also supports breaking down silos and ensures that climate resilience becomes integrated across organizations including the City of Toronto.



Data limitations

Participants raised concerns over the lack of accurate and timely data available to develop and assess climate strategies. Panelists and participants highlighted good data sources including The Climate Atlas of Canada ([Climateatlas.ca](https://climateatlas.ca)) and The Canadian Centre for Climate Services (CCCS), and agreed that while there are some data limitations, the trends are clear, and the lack of perfect data is neither a plausible nor justifiable reason for inaction.

BREAKOUT SESSION 2 - NEIGHBOURHOOD RESILIENCE

Resilient Conversations

The City's Imara Ajani Rolston and attending Local Champions highlighted Resilient Conversations, a series of discussions the City's Resilience Office held with 200 residents across Toronto's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) in July and August of 2018. These conversations were led by Local Champions – local leaders in their neighbourhood – using the Resilient Conversations Toolkit, and resulted in specific recommendations to increase resilience in the neighbourhoods. The Resilient Conversations Toolkit is a resource co-developed by Local Champions and the Resilience Office to empower Local Champions and other community leaders with strategies to continue engaging in conversations around resilience and preparedness in neighbourhoods across the City.

“We need to talk to more diverse grassroots groups to find out what their barriers and challenges to implementing the strategy [are].” – Launch Participant

Enhancing the Capacity of Neighbourhoods

The Neighbourhood Resilience Breakout Session featured a presentation on the Resilience Strategy's Priority Action A.2.1, followed by roundtable discussions focusing on ideas for the implementation of A.2.1. Each table was asked to address two questions – the first on how to build on neighbourhood resilience activities already happening and the second on steps to move forward implementation over the coming years.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RESILIENCE will enhance "the capacity of neighbourhoods to prepare for and recover from shocks through grassroots action and network building." The City will initiate a two-year pilot project beginning in 2020 with three Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) to co-design a neighbourhood assessment tool. The project will bring together existing community knowledge of resilient practices so that residents can identify strengths and create an action plan to address gaps and vulnerabilities. - **ACTION A2.1**

BREAKOUT SESSION 2 - NEIGHBOURHOOD RESILIENCE : WHAT WE HEARD



Grounding the Strategy in neighbourhoods

The common thread between the recommendations across all small groups in the Neighbourhood Resilience session was the need to extend co-design and co-development beyond the planning stages of the Resilience Strategy. Participants acknowledged the importance of involving communities in planning and recognized that the collaborative spirit often gets lost when strategies shift to implementation.

One group noted that the more centralized implementation of the Strategy is, the more likely it could get derailed by political or budgetary considerations. Direct connections between residents and Councillors should be fostered. Another recommendation involved making public the information used to identify chosen NIAs for the pilot project. Many participants lauded the process of working through community organizations and local champions and expressed that this approach should continue through implementation.

BREAKOUT SESSION 2 - NEIGHBOURHOOD RESILIENCE : WHAT WE HEARD

Stronger, more connected neighbourhoods

Participants were clear that implementation of the Resilience Strategy must include building on what is already happening in neighbourhoods. One participant noted that while creating new actions and initiatives is surely of great importance, so is sustaining existing resilience knowledge and infrastructure. This means going beyond just recognizing existing resilience practices to finding ways to enhance them. In addition, those neighbourhoods not chosen as pilot NIAs should not be left behind.

The Strategy should solicit and empower resilience champions in every neighbourhood. Participants noted that this includes actively seeking additional resources and funding. There also seemed to be consensus that everyone has a role to play and every group's participation should be leveraged. There was mention of faith-based groups, schools, and the private sector.

Leverage diverse knowledge

Build on the knowledge and experience of our diverse Toronto. Many newcomers to Canada have had to be resilient in the face of adversity in their previous homes. A big theme of the Resilience Strategy is recognizing that many communities and their leaders are already engaging in resilience planning and activities and this is especially true of Toronto's newcomer population





BREAKOUT SESSION 3 - FLOOD RESILIENT TORONTO WORKING GROUP

The Flood Resilient Toronto Working group was established to develop the flooding resilience portions of Toronto's First Resilience Strategy – a major concern identified through the City's preliminary resilience assessment. The group consists of stakeholders from eight City of Toronto Divisions and nine governmental, private, and academic organizations.

Now that the Strategy is released, this group is focused on leading the implementation of the Strategy's flood resilience actions and functioning as a centralized point to facilitate progress addressing flooding across organizational boundaries. At the working group meeting held during the launch of the Strategy, the group's focus was on operationalizing the Flood Resilient Toronto charter, broad engagement, advancing the risk prioritization tool, and continuing the emphasis on the collaborative approach seen throughout the development of the Strategy.

RESILIENTTO EXHIBITION

The ResilientTO Exhibition showcased works by students and staff from the Daniels faculty and the University of Toronto's School of Cities network. The exhibit was a visual representation of the narrative and background of the Resilience Strategy as well as the role of design in building climate resilient cities.

Located in the First Floor Heritage Hallway at the Daniels Building, the exhibition reflects the Resilience Strategy's three focus areas — Resilient People and Neighborhoods, Resilient Design and Infrastructure, and Leading a Resilient City — and traces political, cultural, and physical manifestations of resilience, design, and infrastructure across Toronto. A particular focus is given to contemporary resilient design and urbanism work, with precedents from around the world.

The exhibition features the work of students and faculty from across Daniels as well as the University of Toronto's School of Cities network and is open from May 25 to August 1, 2019. It was curated by Fadi Masoud, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Urbanism at the Daniels Faculty.



Photo: Harry Choi



Photo: Harry Choi

NEXT STEPS

The City and its partners will begin implementation of the Strategy in the coming months and years with the support of Toronto's residents.

There are many ways to stay informed and get involved in the Resilience Strategy's implementation:

1. Read the Resilience Strategy, information about the process, and supplementary materials like the Indigenous Climate Action Summary Report at toronto.ca/resilience.
2. Participate in the CIHR funded Neighbourhood Resilience Research Initiative built on the work of Centre for Connected Communities taking place in the Fall of 2019.
3. Follow ResilientTO on Twitter at [@ResilientTO](https://twitter.com/ResilientTO).
4. Contact the resilience team at the City at resilience@toronto.ca to join the mailing list or for more information.
5. Check out the ResilientTO exhibit at 1 Spadina Crescent, Toronto, ON (until Aug 1, 2019).
6. Talk to your friends and neighbours about how to take action to make your community more resilient!

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